REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, claims 1, 10, 11, 18, 19, and 26 have been amended. No new matter is being presented, and approval and entry are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-26 are pending and under consideration. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

In the Office Action at page 2, claims 1, 2 and 9-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,103,490 to McMillin in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,370,280 to Cok, et al. and U.S. Patent No. 6,209,004 to Taylor. The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Amended independent claim 1 is directed to a data converting apparatus. In relevant part, independent claim 1 now recites "a limiting part limiting use of the single set of superimposed image data in accordance with limitation information showing a limitation of use of the first set of input data." Additionally, amended independent claim 1 recites "the limitation information including a first permission of a user to initiate the superimposing, a second permission of a user to modify the first set of input data, and a third permission of a user to delete the first set of input data," "the first permission, the second permission, and the third permission being indicated by specified bits in the limitation information," and "limitation information for each user being stored in the first set of input data." Independent claims 10, 11, 18, 19, and 26 have been similarly amended.

McMillin is directed to a method and apparatus for storing and merging multiple optically scanned images. Page 3 of the outstanding Office Action acknowledges, however, that "McMillin does not disclose a limiting part limiting use of the single set of superimposed image data in accordance with limitation information showing a limitation of use of the single set of superimposed image data, wherein the limitation information includes a first permission of a user to initiate the superimposing by the superimposing part." Cok, et al., which is directed to the secure production of composite images, is relied upon to teach these features. At page 4 of the outstanding Office Action, it is acknowledged that "the limitation information disclosed in Cok, et al. does not include a second permission of a user to modify the single set of superimposed image data, or a third permission of a user to delete the single set of superimposed image data. Taylor, which is directed to a method and system for generating and distributing document sets using a relational database, is relied upon to teach these features.

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Page 4 of the outstanding Office Action asserts that "Taylor discloses a method and system for generating and distributing document sets, wherein a user may be assigned a unique password that gives the user access to a specific level of permission for review, editing or deletion of a document." *See* Taylor at col. 4, lines 17-20. Thus, according to the teachings of Taylor, a user must input a password to gain access to a specific level of permission for review, editing or deletion of a document.

The present invention, in contrast, does not require a user to input a password in order to superimpose two sets of input data. Instead, the present invention includes "a limiting part limiting use of the single set of superimposed image data in accordance with limitation information showing a limitation of use of the first set of input data" and the limitation includes "a first permission of a user to initiate the superimposing by the superimposing part, a second permission of a user to modify the first set of input data, and a third permission of a user to delete the first set of input data." Further, the amended independent claims recite that "the first permission, the second permission, and the third permission being indicated by specified bits in the limitation information" and that "limitation information for each user being stored in the first set of input data."

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Taylor fails to cure the deficiencies of McMillin and Cok, et al. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that McMillin, Cok, et al., and Taylor, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the features of amended independent claims 1, 10, 11, 18, 19, and 26, and those claims depending directly or indirectly therefrom. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1-26 patentably distinguish over the prior art and are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action at page 7, claims 3-8 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over McMillin in view of Cok, et al. and Taylor, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,594,405 to Flannery. The reasons for the rejection are set forth in the Office Action and therefore not repeated. The rejection is traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Flannery is relied upon only to teach the storing of limitation information by associating the limitation information with a predetermined form. Applicants respectfully submit that Flannery, which is directed to a method and apparatus for combining foreground and background information on a preprinted form, fails to cure the deficiencies of McMillin, Cok, et al., and Taylor noted above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that McMillin, Cok, et al., Taylor, and Flannery, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the features of dependent claims 3-8, which depend from amended independent claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 3-8 patentably distinguish over the prior art for at least

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the same reasons as independent claim 1, from which claims 3-8 depend and are, therefore, in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.
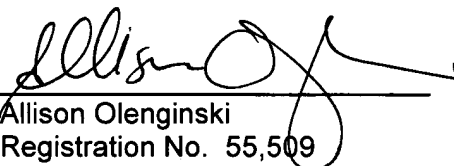
Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 22 Nov 2005

By: _____

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